

# SKINJOBS



Lee Hendon (drums, guitars, vocals), Byron Newlove (bass, vocals), Mitch Fury (guitars, vocals, drums)

**MRR:** How did the Skinjobs come about?

**Lee:** I was complaining to Mitch about not gettin' any, so we decided to start a band to get some.

**Byron:** Mitch and Lee equal good tunes and great people. I tried out for the "bass player" title in summer of 2000. We've been musically holding hands ever since.

**Mitch:** With the future of all things being cast into a state of uncertainty, we decided to reclaim all things pertinent in the current consciousness of now. Accepting that we are exactly where we need to be, right now, precisely and without question, there is no need to spend any more time contemplating "What if we were the Skinjobs?" We are the Skinjobs. So putting truth into action has led to the manifestation of what is now simply the Skinjobs-but simple, it is not.

**MRR:** Do you think that a sexual agenda might be alienating to people who aren't used to thinking about it?

**Lee:** Come on, everybody thinks about sex!

**Byron:** That's part of the point. People need to acknowledge things, and realize that perspective and diversity are only scary because they are unfamiliar. I want to help show that the alien is actually human.

**Mitch:** I would have to agree. Society in the past has stifled the subject of sex, and in doing so has created an underworld, its language is not unfamiliar in our thoughts, only unfamiliar in some of our actions. The Skinjob revolution shines light on the dark corners of our minds to foster and nurture a reclaimed state of being, one that is not cast in the shadows of shame, prejudice, and judgement. We are bringing attention to the hypocrisy of current conservative idioms. Suggesting to "Stifle the urge, it will politely go away" while promoting "Just be yourself" is contradictory. Mindsets that are accepting "Sex sells (as long as it fits into a quantifiable little box

labeled  
'nor-  
mal/family  
values/pro-  
creation')" are  
accepting a two-tier

system of "normal" and "anything different than normal." We are the different, and we won't be stifled any longer. We most definitely won't politely go away.

**MRR:** Why the name Skinjobs?

**Lee:** Because Led Zeppelin is already taken.

**Byron:** It's a term from *Blade Runner*. They are replicants of human beings, kind of like super humans with short life spans. We're super human queers walking around like everyone else, and no one, mostly, can tell.

**Mitch:** Our name is consciously misappropriated. In the movie *Blade Runner*, it was used as a derogatory term for replicants, who being genetically superior to humans, were purposely created with a four-year "expiry date." They could not be distinguished from other "real" humans. We've chosen to use the term Skinjobs as a parallel to queers who are as equally undistinguishable from the rest of society, or at least masters of surviving under the radar. We borrow the question from *Blade Runner*, "What is human?" and further, "What is queer?"

**MRR:** Why do you think the HomoCore movement never exploded the same way, for example, as

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the riot grrrl movement did?

Lee: Huh?

Byron: It's just another angle/community, which has not had an opportunity, as a result of various oppressing forces, to be visibly, tangibly acknowledged.

Mitch: In the history of the civil rights movements within North America, the women's rights movements came before any queer rights movements. As intrinsically connected as they are, there seems to be a linear progression of thought plans that suggest: 1) North Americans are incredibly stubborn and grow overly attached to archaic ideologies, to the point of suppressing their own selves. 2) Our patriarchal system has thrust nurturing solely on the shoulders of women, and thus, it is from their lead that the rest will follow, all in time.

MRR: What's your opinion on where we stand as queers today?

Lee: We stand on Davie St., Commercial Drive, Main St., and Stanley Park.

Byron: Oooh, toughy. "We"-I can't speak for every wonderful and unique queer out there, there is too great of a range for me to represent. But I will say, I feel that there is movement towards acknowledgment and more understanding of every queer imaginable. I feel a diverse community can unite together for support, comfort, acknowledgement, and friendship.

Mitch: We are at an excruciatingly painful and boring state as humans that requires us to label ourselves under a sexual identity in order to further the process of breaking down the societal norms of acceptable sexual interaction and acceptable gender identification. The goal is simple but the means is complicated. People want to be their unique selves. In many ways the "queer" (for lack of a better word) communities seem to be fighting for greater acceptance from the rest of society, while trying to quantify and define each other. This seems to be leading us to a point where the rest of society will become open-minded, less defined sexually, and more inclusive, while the queer community stuck on

maintaining a separate identity will implode upon itself as it becomes more rigid and limited. Sexual identity will be short-lived as compared to sexual actions-which have been the same since day one, quite diverse, just not well documented; it's a long journey that isn't over, it takes time. Documentation is the first step-re-creating a sexually diverse history that everyone owns.

MRR: How do the Skinjobs fit into the Punk community?

Lee: We Rock!

Byron: I don't know really. I personally am not a butterfly flitting in one circle. I'll let Mitch answer this one.

Mitch: Simple with the history of punk being a social cast for misfits, freaks, and queers. Somehow, that is often forgotten. The early punk scene of the 70s, not that I was around back then, was very queer, or sexually ambiguous, without labeling itself as such. Non-conformity was a strong held statement. In being so open-minded and accepting, the punk scene was an easy target for mainstream appropriation. Mass marketing in the 90s watered it down, to make it seem less threatening-and in doing so, omitting anything about punk sexuality. We're here to bring it back.

MRR: How do the Skinjobs fit into the Queer community?

Lee: We're sexy.

Byron: This is hard to answer too. The level of interaction now with band and community, except as shining individuals, has been minimal. I have extreme hope for a friendly, two-way, good street to walk down and smile at every fucking person you see, type o' relationship.

Mitch: Questionably at times, we fit on the fringe of the community if anywhere. Sex sells, so we give it to them. I don't expect the queer community to embrace us as fully as an ABBA cover band, but I believe they will embrace us more, in some ways, than the punk community.

Our existence seems to threaten the calm blue water of complacency. The queer community's strongest power as of late has been its money, and in a capital-

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ist system that means something, however shallow that may be. With all the hoopla over rainbow banners on the streets, in the gay ghettos of whatever city, it's hard to imagine anyone taking a break from their latté to question privileges, and realize that the visibly queer community is only for those who can afford the image, while within the safety of a queer friendly community. Is there a parallel between the high rent prices of many urban centers and the yuppie queer communities that thrive in them? I think so. Pride has a price.

**MRR:** What's the Queer Punk scene like in Vancouver?

**Lee:** Fucking bleak!

**Byron:** Uhhh, what queer punk scene? Fuck, this is great, I feel like a pioneer.

**Mitch:** It's starting to grow thanks to all the kids in the Queer Punk Collective, plus Vancouver has a lot of cool zines, spoken-word performances, and the File This Cabaret. If it weren't for the Queer Punk Collective, we probably wouldn't exist, kisses to them all!

**MRR:** What are some of your influences?

**Lee:** Animal, beer, Sunny Day, chicks, Thirty Ought, beer, pizza, and TV.

**Byron:** I am a latticework of influences, classical to jungle/new house to metal to folk. But a few inspirations are Tori Amos, James Brown, Dave Matthews, and Pearl Jam.

**Mitch:** Cute boy bands that take their shirts off, Blink 182 for mocking a cute boy band taking

their shirts off, Imperial Teen for making the best queer pop punk I've ever heard, Green Day's Tre Cool for shoving a drumstick up his butt and telling everyone at the party he liked it (OK, maybe that's a rumor), Grant and the Smugglers, Panty Raid, XLimpwristX (for simply being), Maynard (from A Perfect Circle, Rob Halford from Judas Priest, Demian from Playin'enemy, Dan from the Murder City Devils, Slow from Portland, Meegan and Che Chapter 127, Chi Pig from SNFU, the singer from Boy Sets Fire, Jon and the boys from Pansy Division, and don't forget, Lil' Kim for rapping with the best of them, and telling them where to lick it!

**MRR:** Where do you see the Skinjobs going in the next year?

**Lee:** To the depths of the subconscious, building a tight bond among aspiring queers, making them unafraid to be themselves.

**Byron:** Up, up, and away! Fuck, I don't know or really care, this is the most fun I've had since grade three.

**Mitch:** New York. Home is calling, we've been away too long. Vancouver is a nice place to live, but the Skinjobs need to go home to the East Village. We want to record, make a video, and play for a bit in Vancouver-the boys and girls here are cute. After taking advantage of Canada and the great American exchange rate, then we'll rock back to Dumba, Squeeze Box, and CBGB's-maybe move back to NYC. I have a date

waiting at Cock 129, and I need some Goldberg's Peanut Chews!

**MRR:** The Skinjobs definitely have an image. How would you explain it?

**Lee:** Our image reflects on how sexy we are, and that with a bunch of make-up and hair accessories, anything is possible.

**Byron:** Imagine being honest and kind, ready to learn, ready to listen, fucking ready to rock, and having a sweet time doing it. Surprise! It's true, that's us, no goopy pomp ignorance negative - just three awesome queers trying to do well with music, and attitude that surges with good, zesty, delicious queer power.

**Mitch:** Freak-Perv, it's not just about us, it's the audience. What a bunch of freaks! We've taken pointers from Priss-the Princess of Blade Runner; from here on, anything goes! I think you also have to ask our go-go dancers about their image, because without them, we'd have no image-and we never know what is going to happen with them on stage. Miss Cookie, Miss Kelly, and Darlene, The Ambassador's Wife have always been one step ahead of us, and the audience-they give great punk fashion tips!

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